

Message Text

PAGE 01 RABAT 06688 141858Z
ACTION SS-25

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USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 6688

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP GI
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH KING HASSAN ON DECEMBER 8, 1976: FUTURE
TRAVELS, SAHARA, GIBRALTAR-CEUTA-MELLILLA AND HEALTH

1. ON DECEMBER 8 KING HASSAN CONVOKED THE FIVE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO ASK SUPPORT FOR THE NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS INITIATIVE HE WOULD BE PRESENTING TO THE UN (RABAT 6641). PRESENT WERE PRIME MINISTER OSMAN, FOREIGN MINISTER LARAKI, THE UK AND FRENCH AMBASSADORS, THE SOVIET AND CHINESE CHARGES D'AFFAIRES AND MYSELF. FOLLOWING A FIVE-MINUTE TALK ON HIS NUCLEAR INITIATIVE, HASSAN CHATTED PLEASANTLY FOR THE NEXT TEN MINUTES ABOUT HIS VISIT TO FRANCE AND HIS FUTURE TRAVEL PLANS AND ASKED ABOUT SECRETARY-DESIGNATE VANCE, AVERELL HARRIMAN AND REBERT MURPHY.

2. THE KING HAS CLEARLY CROSSED A PSYCHOLOGICAL RUBICON IN FLYING FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE 1972 COUP ATTEMPT, AND HE OBVIOUSLY ENJOYED IT. BECAUSE OF THIS AND HIS GREATLY STRENGTHENED INTERNAL POSITION, HE WILL ONCE AGAIN BE ON THE CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 RABAT 06688 141858Z

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL CIRCUIT. AS ALREADY REPORTED, THE KING TOLD US HE PLANNED TO MAKE "MANY MORE" VISITS NEXT YEAR, AND, TURNING TO ME, SAID HE HOPED PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD RENEW THE LONGSTANDING INVITATION FOR HIM TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES. TO

THE SOVIET CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE LENINGRAD "VERY SOON", NOTING THAT A VISIT HE ONCE MADE OF TWO HOURS OR SO WAS JUST NOT ENOUGH. REFERRING TO HIS PAST CONVERSATIONS WITH PRINCE PHILIP AND PRINCESS MARGARET, HASSAN TOLD THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR HE HOPED FOR AN EARLY VISIT TO MOROCCO BY QUEEN ELIZABETH. THEN MORE OUT OF COURTESY, I BELIEVE, THAN TO SEEK AN INVITATION, THE KING TOLD THE CHINESE CHARGE HE HOPED ONE DAY TO VISIT CHINA, NOTING THAT HE HAD KNOWN CHOU EN-LAI AND FOUND HIM "A REMARKABLE FIGURE".

4. ON THE SAHARA, HASSAN LAUGHINGLY SAID HE IMAGINED WE MUST BE COLLECTIVELY RELIEVED TO LEARN THAT HE HAD NOT CALLED US IN TO DISCUSS THE SAHARA, ADDING THAT THE GOM HAD THINGS VERY MUCH UNDER CONTROL, AND THAT THE SUBJECT IS MUCH MORE A PROBLEM FOR OTHERS THAN FOR MOROCCO.

5. REGARDING GIBRALTAR, THE KING AT ONE POINT RETURNED TO HIS HOPE FOR AN EARLY VISIT BY QUEEN ELIZABETH, AND LIGHTHEARTEDLY ASKED BRITISH AMBASSADOR JOHN DUNCAN: "WHY DON'T YOU GIVE GIBRALTAR BACK TO SPAIN; SO OUR SPANISH FRIENDS CAN RETURN CEUTA AND MELILLA TO ME? THIS WOULD SOLVE BOTH OUR PROBLEMS." AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, HE MISCHIEVOUSLY, BUT NOT, IN MY VIEW, SERIOUSLY, ADDED TO A NONPLUSSED DUNCAN, WHO IS DEAF IN HIS RIGHT EAR AND HAD THE CHINESE INTERPRETER WHISTLING IN HIS LEFT: "IF THIS REALLY GIVES YOU A PROBLEM, I WILL BE GLAD TO LEASE CEUTA TO YOU." COMMENT: ALSO HANDICAPPED WITH THE COLLECTIVE LAUGHTER, DUNCAN MISSED MOST OF THIS PART OF THE CONVERSATION. AT HIS REQUEST LATER IN THE DAY I REVIEWED WITH HIM WHAT WAS SAID. HE, FRENCH AMBASSADOR RAIMOND AND I AGREED THAT THE

KING'S REMARKS WERE ESSENTIALLY A REITERATION OF HIS LOW-KEY COMMENTS TO THE PARIS PRESS ON NOVEMBER 25 LINKING THE RETURN OF GIBRALTAR TO SPAIN WITH THE RETURN OF CEUTA AND MELILLA TO MOROCCO, THAT THE KING CONTINUES TO BE RELAXED ON CEUTA AND MELILLA, AND THAT THE QUIP ABOUT LEASING CEUTA SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

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PAGE 03 RABAT 06688 141858Z

6. CALL ON KING GAVE ME AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE HIM IN ACTION. SINCE HIS MINOR OPERATION LAST AUGUST (RABAT 4680), AND SUBSEQUENT INCORRECT PRESS REPORTS OUT OF MADRID OF HIS PLANS FOR SECRET HOSPITALIZATION, WHICH WERE VIGOROUSLY DENIED, THERE HAVE BEEN RUMORS PROVIDING GRIST FOR THE ALL TOO UNINFORMED DIPLOMATIC CIRCUIT GOING AS FAR AS THE LAST STAGES OF RECTAL CANCER FROM WHICH HIS FATHER ALLEGEDLY DIED IN 1961 (AS WE KNOW, THIS WAS NOT THE CAUSE OF HIS FATHER'S DEATH). FOLLOWING HIS AUGUST OPERATION, HASSAN NEEDED TIME TO RECOVER, REDUCED HIS ACTIVITIES DURING RAMADAN, AND WAS CLEARLY NOT IN TOP FORM. FOR THE PAST TWO MONTHS, HOWEVER, HE HAS KEPT TO A VERY FULL SCHEDULE WITH EXTENSIVE EXPOSURE TO PRESS IN NUMEROUS INTERVIEWS AND PRESS CONFERENCES,

DURING WHICH HE HAS BEEN HIS CUSTOMARILY ALERT, AT TIMES ACERBIC
AND WITTY SELF. FRENCH
AMBASSADOR RAIMOND TOLD ME THE KING WAS IN EXCELLENT FORM DURING
HIS STATE VISIT TO FRANCE. WHILE HASSAN HAS ALWAYS STRUCK ME AS
OLDER THAN HIS YEARS (47) PROBABLY BECAUSE OF BURNING THE CANDLE
AT BOTH ENDS IN HIS EARLIER YEARS, HE SEEMED DURING OUR LATEST
MEETING IN BETTER FORM THAN WHEN I FIRST SAW HIM FOR AN EXTENDED
CONVERSATION IN MAY.

7. NO DOUBT BUOYED BY ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING THE
SAHARA, HIS SUCCESSFUL START OF RETURNING MOROCCO TO CONSTITUTIONAL
GOVERNMENT AND HIS RETURN TO THE WORLD STAGE THROUGH HIS VISIT
TO FRANCE, HE WAS CONFIDENT AND RELAXED IN LOOKING TOWARDS HIS
COUNTRY'S FUTURE.
ANDERSON

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